



Community Engagement Strategy

*Great Lakes 2030 Review &
Environmental Special Rate Continuation*

2012-2013

Great Lakes Council Community Engagement Strategy

Great Lakes 2030 Review & Environmental Special Rate Continuation

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Annexure 1

Community Engagement Schedule

Background

Great Lakes Council is committed to improving our service delivery and responding to our community's needs. It will actively seek out and encourage the community to provide meaningful input and opinion to inform its decision making.

This Community Engagement Strategy has been developed specifically to inform the review of the Community Strategic Plan, *Great Lakes 2030*, and to consult with the community on the proposal to seek the continuation of the Environmental and Dredging Special Rate.

Great Lakes 2030 is the community's plan, developed in accordance with the NSW Government's Integrated Planning & Reporting legislation. It was endorsed by Council in April 2011 after an in depth community consultation program to determine the community's aspirations and priorities for the future.

Under the legislation, each incoming council must review the Plan with its community to make sure the objectives and strategies are still current and that nothing significant has changed since the Plan's endorsement.

One of the main objectives identified by the community in *Great Lakes 2030* relates to the protection of the natural environment. This has been a major focus of Council and the community for a number of years and the community has shown consistent support for an Environmental Special Rate (ESR) which has been in place since 2001.

The ESR funds a number of environmental projects and on-ground works aimed at protecting and improving our natural environment. Since 2009 the ESR has also included

a 1% component specifically for conducting dredging projects in local waterways.

In conjunction with the review of *Great Lakes 2030* Council is seeking to gauge the community's support for continuation of this special rate, which will expire in June 2014.

Purpose

- To ensure the community and other stakeholders have opportunities to participate and be involved in decision making that impacts on their lives and interests
- To engage with the community so that their ideas and opinions are reflected in the review of their Community Strategic Plan
- To meet the requirements of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) by conducting community consultation in regards to the proposal to seek the continuation of the special rate variation for environmental and dredging programs

Engagement objectives

Approach to community engagement

Engagement is an *"inclusive term to describe the broad range of interactions between people. It can include a variety of approaches, such as one-way communication or information delivery, consultation, involvement and collaboration in decision-making, and empowered action in informal groups or formal partnerships"* (source: State of Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment 2005).


Previous planning mechanisms have required councils simply to *inform* and *consult* with the community. The new community strategic planning framework goes beyond this level of public participation and encourages councils to aim to at least *involve* communities in the planning process, with *collaborative* engagement identified as the preferred level, with structures in place for ongoing engagement.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has devised a model to identify the core principles of community engagement. The model builds a scale of engagement objectives, which assist in determining activities and methods for inviting community participation and classifying outcomes based on the impact of the engagement on the decision making process.

The engagement process to be used for the long term strategic planning for

the Great Lakes area aims to be as inclusive as possible and to offer everyone the chance to participate in the process. The purpose of the engagement strategy is to involve the community in activities that allow them to express their thoughts on their current and future needs and expectations, as well as how this might be achieved. This strategy was developed with consideration of the Social Justice Principles of Equity, Access, Participation and Rights.

However the level to which stakeholders are engaged will vary depending on the desires of individual stakeholders and the stage of the planning process. Accordingly, stakeholders may be engaged through a range of the scale of activities as outlined in the diagram below.

Increasing level of public impact 					
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternative, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory committees • Consensus building • Participatory decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decision

Source: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Key engagement principles

- 1 Everyone has a part to play in the future of the Great Lakes local government area
- 2 *Great Lakes 2030* can only be delivered through a true partnership between the community, Council and other stakeholders
- 3 *Great Lakes 2030* will assist the community to maintain its identity and lifestyle as it faces the challenges of the future
- 4 *Great Lakes 2030* will be owned by the community - it is not Council's plan, it is the community's plan
- 5 *Great Lakes 2030* provides Council with a guide to manage the changes and pressures of the future on behalf and for the benefit of the community
- 6 *Great Lakes 2030* is a long-term plan - we can't do everything at once, but the Community Strategic Plan provides a way forward

Key engagement objectives

- 1 Ensure the community and stakeholders are aware of opportunities to have a say in the review of *Great Lakes 2030*
- 2 Consult and seek feedback on the objectives and strategies in *Great Lakes 2030* to ensure they represent the community's aspirations and priorities for the future of the Great Lakes area
- 3 Educate residents about past and current achievements resulting from the ESR
- 4 Provide opportunities for residents to express their views on the proposed continuation of the ESR

- 5 Seek and measure community support for the continuation of the existing ESR

Engagement Parameters

Geographic boundaries

Community engagement will be carried out throughout the Great Lakes local government area. All residents and non-resident ratepayers will have the opportunity to provide feedback on *Great Lakes 2030* and the continuation of the ESR.

Timelines

Community engagement on both topics (CSP and ESR) will occur during October and November 2012. The revised *Great Lakes 2030* will be presented to Council for endorsement in the first quarter of 2013 after it has been placed on public exhibition. Council may resolve to apply for the continuation of the ESR during December 2012, with the application deadline in mid-February.

Legislative

Under the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework councils must develop and endorse a Community Strategic Plan, on behalf of its local government area. The plan must identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future.

Councils must also prepare and implement a Community Engagement Strategy for engagement with the local community in developing and reviewing the Community Strategic Plan.

Each newly elected council must review the Community Strategic Plan within nine months of the local government elections. This is the first

review of *Great Lakes 2030* to be undertaken.

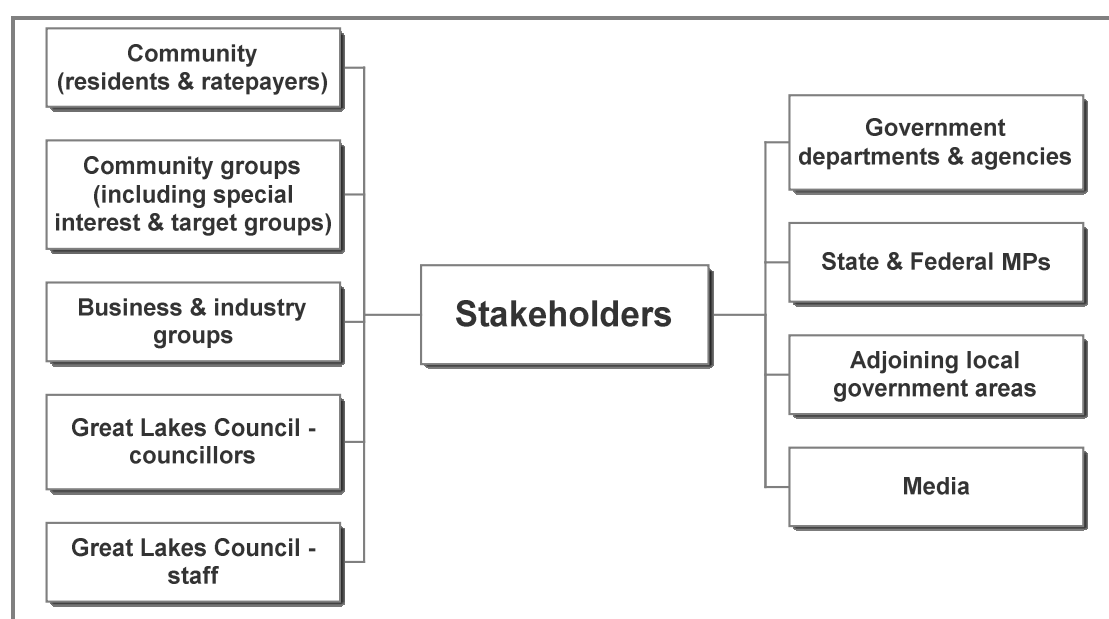
In addition, in 2010 the Minister for Local Government delegated certain decision making responsibilities to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory

Tribunal (IPART) including reviewing applications for special rate variations from councils. The application process requires that councils show evidence of community support for variations by undertaking community engagement activities.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for the CSP review and ESR continuation include (but are not limited to) the following key groups. Details regarding *how* and

when stakeholders will be consulted is included in the 'Community Engagement Schedule' (included as Annexure 1).



Community engagement timeline & activities

The detailed community engagement program including details of key stakeholder groups, engagement tools and engagement dates is included in the 'Community Engagement Schedule' (included as Annexure 1).

The community will have a number of means and opportunities to engage in this process including participation at community meetings and community events, completion of hard copy feedback forms and through an on-line survey. Council will also commission an independent firm to undertake a statistically relevant random telephone survey in relation to the ESR proposal.

Evaluation

It is important to track how we are progressing in delivering on *Great Lakes 2030*. While the means we use may change over time, progress across the four Key Directions will be monitored to provide an assessment of our success in achieving our objectives. Regular reporting on this progress is required and appropriate methods will be utilised so as to inform the community as to the progress.

Where to from here?

The timeline below represents a general overview of the upcoming community engagement schedule on the review of the CSP and the continuation of the ESR as well as key milestones of the Integrated Planning & Reporting activities.

The Community Strategic Plan, Council's Delivery Program 2013-2017, Council's Operational Plan 2013-14, and Council's Resourcing Strategy will be presented to Council and the community for public exhibition during the first half of 2013. Submissions will be considered by Council prior to adopting the strategic planning documents in June 2013.

Pending the outcome of the community engagement, an application for the continuation of the ESR may be lodged with IPART in February 2013.

